

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are present in this application, with Claims 1, 3, 9, 10, 11 and 15 amended above. The specification is amended to correct a typographical error. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and review of the application as amended above.

At the outset, the Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 3, 9 and 11. Per the Examiner's suggestion, these claims are redrafted in independent form, including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. These claims are therefore in condition for allowance.

Before addressing the merits of the rejections based on prior art, a brief description of the present application is provided. The application is directed to a coin counting and sorting machine. The coin machine may be used by the general public, for example, as part of a kiosk in a public area and can generate a cash voucher that may be used to purchase goods or services within a retail establishment. According to an embodiment of the present invention, the coin machine provides for access to a remote terminal. Therefore, the coin machine can serve as a robust, coin-accepting gateway to the almost limitless variety of economic transactions available through public and private computer networks. Further, the coin machine allows for the value of coins accepted to be combined with other forms of currency and with credit as part of a single transaction.

The Examiner rejected Claims 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Molbak et al ('546). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Molbak discloses a coin machine which counts and sorts coins, and allows a user to select between receiving a voucher or donating the value to a charity. If a user opts to have the coins donated to charity, the user can select a charity and a receipt is issued by the machine that identifies the charity and the amount donated. Unlike the present invention, the Molbak coin machine does not communicate with any other device and therefore cannot conduct transactions with an external network. In this

regard, Molbak does not communicate with a charity but merely separates the donated coins so that they can be retrieved when the machine is periodically serviced.

With reference to the specific claims at issue, Molbak fails to suggest or disclose "a controller adapted to communicate messages with a remote terminal associated with a selected financial transaction, said messages comprising a command to apply at least a portion of a calculated monetary value of the coins to said selected financial transaction," as defined in Claim 15. As described above, Molbak cannot communicate with a remote terminal, and therefore cannot apply a portion of the monetary value of the counted coins to a selected financial transaction associated with the remote terminal. This ground of rejection should therefore be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 4-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Molbak et al. in view of Inoue. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Molbak is described above. The Examiner acknowledges that Molbak fails to disclose a transport device for transporting the coins from a user to the container at a controlled rate, and proposes the combination with Inoue. Notably, Inoue is not directed to a coin counting and sorting machine, but rather is directed to a coin dispenser that is used to supply coins or tokens to a user upon the insertion of particular denomination notes or bills. A user does not dump coins into the Inoue device, but rather receives coins that are dispensed into the bucket after inserting a note or bill. Inoue discloses a belt conveyor 23 for transporting coins from a coin receptacle 17 to a bucket 35; however, the Inoue belt conveyor does not provide the function of "transporting the coins from a user to the container at a controlled flow rate," since the coins are transported to a user by Inoue rather than from a user. There would therefore be no teaching or suggestion to combine the references as proposed. Moreover, neither reference suggests or discloses a controller "adapted to conduct a financial transaction with a remote computer for an amount including at least said monetary value of said coins," as defined in Claim 1. Inoue therefore fails to make up for the deficiencies of Molbak described above. This ground of rejection should therefore be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Molbak et al. ('546) in view of Inoue and further in view of Japanese publication 3-63795. Similarly, the Examiner rejected Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Molbak in view of Japanese publication 3-63795. These grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed.

Japanese publication 3-63795 discloses a coin selector having a device that automatically discharges foreign matters (e.g., counterfeit coins) at the time the foreign matters are supplied to the coin selector. The Applicants note that the reference is difficult to understand fully in view of the single drawing and limited description. Nevertheless, the reference clearly states that the foreign matters are ejected "at the time of discriminating the coin as a forgery ...[so that] a bad influence of foreign matters upon the next coin processing is prevented." In contrast, the present application describes that debris is dispensed after all the coins, including any unacceptable coins, have been extracted, and thus only non-coin debris remains to be dispensed. Both Claims 2 and 10 define a "controller causing the container to dispense debris therefrom after all the coins have been extracted from the container by the feed." Moreover, the Japanese reference fails to suggest or disclose a controller "adapted to conduct a financial transaction with a remote computer for an amount including at least said monetary value of said coins," as defined in Claims 1 and 10. The Japanese reference therefore fails to make up for the deficiencies of Molbak and Inoue described above. This ground of rejection should therefore be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected Claims 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Molbak et al. ('546) in view of Japanese publication 3-63795, and further in view of Molbak et al. ('299). This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed. The Examiner has cited Molbak '299 merely for its disclosure of coin rail 506a and solenoid 516', and the reference otherwise fails to make up for the deficiencies described above in connection with Claim 10. This ground of rejection should also be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected Claims 17-19 (which depend on Claim 15) under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Molbak et al. ('546) in view of British publication 2188467. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

British publication 2188467 discloses a device for dispensing sheets with information allowing a commodity (such as gas or electricity) to be purchased. The Examiner has apparently cited the British publication merely for its disclosure of a card reader and a paper currency acceptor. The reference otherwise does not make up for the deficiencies of Molbak described above in connection with Claim 15. This ground of rejection should also be withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected Claims 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Molbak et al. ('546) in view of Helbling. This ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

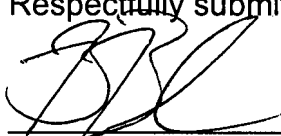
Helbling discloses a terminal that allows a user to make a charitable donation to various selectable charities. Helbling discloses transmitting data about users' charitable donations directly to the donee charitable institutions using a communications link. Unlike the present application, the Helbling terminal cannot receive or discriminate coins, but rather discloses only the receiving of dollar bills or credit/debit cards. There is thus no teaching or suggestion to combine the reference with Molbak as proposed by the Examiner, as the only suggestion for the proposed combination comes from the present application. This ground of rejection should also be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-22 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested, and a timely Notice of Allowability is solicited.

Serial No. 09/328,529
May 23, 2000
Page 11

Our check in the amount of \$117.00 is enclosed for the later presentation of 3 additional independent claims in excess of three, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.16(b). To the extent necessary, Applicants petition the Commissioner for a two-month extension of time, extending to May 29, 2000, the period for response to the Office Action dated December 27, 1999. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-0639.

Respectfully submitted,



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